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Committee	Finance, Risk and Assurance Committee
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## Health and Safety Update

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Finance, Risk and Assurance Committee on the health and safety performance of the organisation.

### 2. Background

The GWRC Organisational Performance Report contains detailed analysis of the organisation's health and safety management performance against key metrics as at the end of the financial year. This report has been separately sent to Councillors via the Councillor Bulletin.

This health and safety update report contains supplementary information on our key organisational risks and how we are managing those risks.

### 3. Understanding Our Risks

We have categorised some of our high/extreme risk activities into eight groupings to better understand the key risks associated with our work. These groupings are:

- Workplace transport
- Contracted activity
- Physical works
- Working in/around water
- Aggressive situations
- Lone/remote working
- Use of hazardous substances
- Tree Work

As our environment is always changing, it is important we monitor our key risks and identify whether there are changes to our risk categories. Analysis of data from KESAW (our health and safety management system) shows emerging risk trends in the following areas:

- Interaction with the general public, for example at Greater Wellington Regional Council organised events and our camping grounds.
- Failure of equipment and machinery that we operate in the course of our work.

In previous reports to this Committee, we have highlighted different key risk areas and how we manage those risks. This report details how we support our people who work alone and/or in remote areas.

#### **4. How we manage risks associated lone/ remote working**

Working alone and/or working in remote areas are integral to some of our jobs, for example:

- water quality sampling;
- checking bait lines; and
- monitoring native bird life (e.g. Project Kaka).

We are responsible for supporting our people by providing them with the systems, equipment and tools to ensure that work can be undertaken in a safe manner and there are emergency procedures in place if something goes wrong. These systems, equipment and tools are described in detail below.

##### **4.1.1 Personal Locator Beacon (PLB)**

A PLB is a portable transmitter that sends out a personalized emergency distress signal when activated to the nearest rescue services. Each PLB is equipped with a Unique Identifying Number (UIN). This code is what is transmitted in the electronic burst to satellites.

The UIN is linked to a computer database. The electronic burst provides Search and Rescue with the location of the PLB, while the UIN links to the database and provides the employee's name, address, phone number and any pertinent information such as medical problems. The database also provides information on who should be contacted in the organisation in the event of an emergency. If the PLB is activated, a rescue response is initiated.

##### **4.1.2 Mobile phones/RT radio**

When working alone and/or in remote areas, our people are equipped with either mobile phones and/or Radio Telephone (RT) radios.

The mobile phone network does not have effective coverage in many of our remote areas so RT radios are the preferred communication equipment. We operate Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radios which are designed for urban and to some extent open country use. Currently officers are working with the

relevant teams at Greater Wellington on a project to investigate options to solve coverage challenges in rugged hill country.

#### 4.1.3 ERoad

We also use the ERoad system for our vehicle fleet management. One feature of this system is our ability to track the location of vehicles by GPS. Although employees are not always in their vehicles, the ERoad system provides the location of the vehicle and therefore the general location of the employee should they require support. The location of our vehicles is monitored during the day to ensure vehicles are returned as specified in our booking system.

#### 4.1.4 Systems

We operate several systems which monitor the location and whereabouts of our lone or remote workers from a central communication point. The member of staff going into the field enters the details of their daily movements into their calendars, blocking out expected times spent at each location, naming the location, and entering the contact details for each location, for example listing the name and phone number of the landowner. If several locations are being visited, each is listed and detailed.

Another member of staff is then designated as a buddy who has the responsibility of monitoring the whereabouts of the person in the field and either acknowledge their safe return or take appropriate action should the colleague need support.

An additional method of ensuring points of communication with our lone or remote workers is the Beacon Hill Buddy Protocol. The Beacon Hill Signal Station is staffed 24/7, 365 days per year. The employee provides specific information to Beacon Hill on their movements for the day and checks in with Beacon Hill upon their return. If Beacon Hill do not receive notification from the employee that they have returned, Beacon Hill will escalate to the employee's manager, who will initiate an emergency response.

#### 4.1.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When an employee is working alone or remotely the appropriate PPE must be worn. This ensures that our people are equipped to undertake the specific tasks in their job plan. PPE could include items such as appropriate clothing for the weather, wet weather gear, a first aid kit and/or specific items relating to the task being undertaken.

#### 4.1.6 Training

We provide training programmes for our employees that are tailored to our specific needs, for example, field based first aid training. Part of this course covers how an individual can perform first aid on themselves should they be in a situation where there is no immediate support.

## 5. Communication

There is no communication required.

## **6. The decision-making process and significance**

No decision is being sought in this report.

### **6.1 Engagement**

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

## **7. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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